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Economics and Statistics Administration  
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**2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS PROGRAM DECISION MEMORANDUM SERIES: 2016.24**

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**MEMORANDUM FOR:** The Record

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**Subject:** Decision on 2020 Census Scheduling Tool

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This memorandum documents the Census Bureau's decision to use Oracle Primavera as the schedule management tool for the 2020 Census.

**Background**

In the spring of 2012, the 2020 Research and Planning Office (20RPO) began an evaluation to determine whether to continue to use the legacy project management tool, Oracle Primavera, or make the transition to Microsoft Project (the Census Bureau's enterprise scheduling tool standard) for managing the 2020 Census. The 20RPO conducted an assessment to identify opportunities and risks associated with each tool and determine what requirements were critical in managing large, complex schedules. The assessment included documenting professional opinions from industry-leading scheduling tool experts in both the private and public (e.g., Department of Defense, National Aeronautics and Space Administration) sectors, multiple consultations with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and their subject matter experts, and numerous discussions with software vendors and decennial-experienced Census Bureau staff.

**Discussion**

The 20RPO's Schedule Team sought feedback from independent scheduling experts. The recurring theme heard from these schedule experts was Microsoft Project is best suited for smaller, less complex projects (e.g. those without a large number of interdependent tasks). For larger programs (e.g. those with more than 5,000 activities and highly integrated project schedules), Oracle Primavera is typically used. This is because Oracle Primavera has been built with the vigorous logic required for more complex programs that integrate multiple schedules and thousands of interrelated activities. Also, Primavera has specific functionality that is critical to managing large, complex schedules.

Primavera has been used for the planning and scheduling of decennial censuses since the 1990s. It has proven to be an effective solution in handling the increasing maturity of the decennial schedule

management process, as lessons learned have continued to be applied to our practices. It also offers maximum flexibility in schedule design, applying scheduling best practices, and in handling the large, complex (and uniquely challenging) nature of the decennial census schedule, with its numerous projects and cross-project links (logic). To conduct a successful 2020 Census, we will need to orchestrate a sequence of thousands of activities, across numerous offices, both internal and external to the Census Bureau, in support of dozens of highly interdependent operations. Remaining with Primavera as the 2020 Census scheduling tool provides the least amount of risk for the program, as confirmed by prominent scheduling experts, GAO subject matter experts, and experienced master schedulers of large and complex programs.

### **Decision**

The Census Bureau will use Oracle Primavera as the scheduling tool for the 2020 Census.

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1. A major program level decision that will affect the overall design or have significant effect on the 2020 Census operations or systems.
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